

Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr. released the following statement today at the Vigil for Peace in Darfur, Sudan in Chicago:

"The United States has a moral responsibility to act decisively to stop the genocide in Darfur. In Darfur, as many as 400,000 people have died and 2.5 million have been displaced. In September 2004, I traveled to Darfur to see this devastation first-hand, and in March 2005, I passed legislation that provided \$500 million in food aid and humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering in Darfur.

"However, despite the financial aid provided by the United States and the international community, more must be done to create a sustainable peace. To promote peace, we need to continue to provide aid, but more importantly, we need the Darfur region to be secure. Working multilaterally with our allies, we need to bolster the African Union force with at least 20,000 troops and provide them with a mandate to protect, not just observe. We need to disarm the Janjaweed militias so they can not attack civilians and ensure that the Sudanese military is not complicit in these attacks.

"If the violence continues we need to think about imposing a 'no-fly' zone around Darfur and to explore the possibility of sanctions against the Sudanese government. And we need to bring all of the parties involved in this conflict to the table to negotiate a just and lasting peace.

"It is time to stop the bloodshed of innocent people. As the world's only super power, the United States has an obligation to end genocide anywhere, and to provide this generation, and the next, an opportunity for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."